



**LEESBURG**  
VETERINARY HOSPITAL

# SERVICE DOG ETIQUETTE

## HOW SHOULD I BEHAVE AROUND A SERVICE DOG AND THEIR HANDLER?

### **Treat the service dog and their handler as a team**

Talk to the person first, asking if you can speak or touch the dog, even if they seem at rest. Speaking, calling, or petting the dog first may confuse him or her and distract them from their job. It may be best to ignore the service dog entirely (you're not being rude!); and don't be offended if their handler says no.

### **Don't feed a service dog**

Service dogs may be on a special diet or fixed feeding schedule. Food can be a huge distraction too, (they are dogs, after all!) taking their focus away from their duties.

### **Don't ask personal questions**

It's extremely rude and awkward to ask personal questions about the dog's job or their handler's disability. Just because you can't see a disability, doesn't mean it's there or that you should be nosy. Some handlers have "invisible disabilities" such as hearing loss, diabetes, and post-traumatic stress-disorder.

